



# PANHANDLE

BENEWAH, BONNER, BOUNDARY, KOOTENAI, & SHOSHONE COUNTIES

## LABOR FORCE & EMPLOYMENT

The Panhandle's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased from 8.1 percent in January to 8.0 percent in February. Unemployment statistics always reflect conditions in the week containing the 12<sup>th</sup> of the month. The February unemployment statistics did not reflect the closure of the Sunshine Mine near Kellogg, or the layoffs at Coldwater Creek's catalog warehouse in Ponderay and call center in Coeur d'Alene, all of which occurred in the last two weeks of the month. Combined, they accounted for the loss of 230 jobs.

The February 2001 unemployment rate was two-tenths of a percentage point higher than the February 2000 rate. Job losses at mines and lumber mills increased the number of unemployed people by 6.3 percent, from 9,550 to 10,150 (not seasonally adjusted). Year-over-year, *Lumber & Wood Products* lost 430 jobs, while *Mining* lost 30 jobs (not counting the 130 jobs lost when Sunshine closed in mid-February).

Most other industrial sectors added jobs, year-over-year. Construction at the Avista-Cogentrix turbine plant in Rathdrum pushed *Construction* employment this February above the previous February's level. Electronics assembly plants, metal fabricators, and other manufacturers added 240 *All Other Manufacturing* jobs between February 2000 and February 2001. Verizon Northwest's order-processing centers in Coeur d'Alene contributed 60 new *Communication & Utilities* jobs.

*Services* added 800 jobs between February 2000 and February 2001 because of the opening of the motel next to the Coeur d'Alene Tribe's casino near Worley, the continued expansion of the health care industry, and

Panhandle Table 1: Labor Force & Employment

	Feb 2001*	Jan 2001	Feb 2000	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<b>Seasonally Adjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	90,060	90,630	87,880	-0.6	2.5
Unemployed	7,230	7,380	6,850	-2.0	5.5
% of Labor Force Unemployed	8.0%	8.1%	7.8%		
Total Employment	82,830	83,250	81,030	-0.5	2.2
<b>Unadjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	89,050	90,120	86,780	-1.2	2.6
Unemployed	10,150	9,860	9,550	2.9	6.3
% of Labor Force Unemployed	11.4%	10.9%	11.0%		
Total Employment	78,900	80,260	77,230	-1.7	2.2
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**</b>	64,420	64,910	62,610	-0.8	2.9
<b>Goods-Producing Industries</b>	13,460	13,760	13,520	-2.2	-13.3
Mining	940	960	970	-2.1	-3.1
Construction	3,980	4,120	3,820	-3.4	4.2
Manufacturing	8,540	8,680	8,730	-1.6	-2.2
Lumber & Wood Products	3,960	4,060	4,390	-2.5	-9.8
All Other Manufacturing	4,580	4,620	4,340	-0.9	5.5
<b>Service-Producing Industries</b>	50,960	51,150	49,090	-0.4	3.8
Transportation	1,430	1,480	1,370	-3.4	4.4
Communication & Utilities	1,060	1,050	1,000	1.0	6.0
Wholesale Trade	2,210	2,230	2,210	-0.9	0.0
Retail Trade	14,500	14,730	14,120	-1.6	2.7
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	2,520	2,530	2,440	-0.4	3.3
Service & Miscellaneous	15,990	16,110	15,190	-0.7	5.3
Government Administration	7,640	7,680	7,380	-0.5	3.5
Government Education	5,610	5,340	5,380	5.1	4.3

\* Preliminary estimate

\*\*Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

growth in a wide variety of service businesses. The year-over-year job gains did not reflect the 300 jobs added by the new Center Partners customer service center in Coeur d'Alene between late February and late March. Despite far lower snow levels, motels and amusement facilities this ski season nearly reached the record employment levels set in the 1999-2000 ski season.

Kootenai County was the source of all 380 jobs added by *Retail Trade*. Falling incomes from their timber and mining mainstays depressed retail sales and employment in the other Panhandle counties during the last half of 2000. According to the Idaho Tax Commission's quarterly sales tax reports, taxable sales in Benewah County were 1.3 percent lower in the second half of 2000 than in the second half of 1999; in Bonner County, 0.6 percent lower; in Boundary County, 2.2 percent lower; and in Shoshone County, 5.1 percent lower. In Kootenai County, taxable sales were 5.0 percent higher in the second half of 2000 than in the second half of 1999.

## **SPECIAL TOPIC: POPULATION**

This newsletter's FYI section contains information from the 2000 Census of Population about population growth in Idaho counties. In terms of percentage growth between 1990 and 2000, the Panhandle was the second-fastest growing region in Idaho, which was the fifth-fastest growing state. Population in the Panhandle grew 40.8 percent, from 126,617 to 178,333, while the State of Idaho's population grew 28.5 percent, and the U.S. resident population grew 13.1 percent.

In percentage terms, the Panhandle's population grew almost as fast in the 1990s as it did in the legendary 1970s, when it grew 44.2 percent. In absolute terms, it added more population in the 1990s than in the 1970s. In an average year in the 1990s the Panhandle added 5,172 people, and in an average year in the 1970s it added 3,642 people.

Benewah County's population grew 15.5 percent from 7,937 in 1990 to 9,171 in 2000. In 1990, Benewah County ranked as the 29<sup>th</sup> largest of Idaho's 44 counties. By 2000, it ranked 28<sup>th</sup>. The economic efforts of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe created more than 400 jobs in Western Benewah County during the 1990s, while the St. Maries area saw slower job and population growth. In the 1990s Benewah County added 1,234 residents, while in the economically troubled 1980s it lost 355 residents; and in the 1970s it added 2,062 residents.

Bonner County's population grew an impressive 38.4 percent—from 26,622 in 1990 to 36,835 in 2000—moving up a notch from 10<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> largest county in Idaho. Bonner County succeeded in diversifying its economy through the growth of tourism, development of the Coldwater Creek mail-order catalog company, and growth of a variety of manufacturing companies. This allowed its population to grow, despite the long-term decline of the timber industry. In the 1990s Bonner County added 10,213 residents, while in the economically troubled 1980s it added 2,459 residents, and in the 1970s it added 8,603 residents.

Boundary County's population grew 18.5 percent—from 8,332 in 1990 to 9,871 in 2000—moving up a notch from Idaho's 28<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> largest county. Boundary County's economic base grew as CEDU Family of Services greatly increased enrollment in its programs for teenagers, Anheuser Busch expanded its Elk Mountain hops farms, ornamental tree nurseries and Christmas tree farms grew, and the Kootenai Tribe's inn and casino in Bonners Ferry attracted more and more visitors. In the 1990s Boundary County added 1,539 residents, while in the 1980s it added 1,043 residents, and in the 1970s it added 1,805 residents.

Kootenai County, whose population grew 55.7 percent—from 69,795 in 1990 to 108,685 in 2000—was the third fastest growing county in Idaho. Only two small counties—Blaine and Teton—grew at faster rates.

Kootenai County went from being Idaho's fourth largest county in 1990 to its third largest county in 2000. National attention given to the county's tourist attractions drew many newcomers, while strong job growth accommodated the population growth. In the 1990s Kootenai County added 38,890 residents, while in the economically troubled 1980s it added 10,025 residents, and in the 1970s it added 24,438 residents.

Shoshone County's population fell 1.1 percent, from 13,931 in 1990 to 13,771 in 2000. Shoshone County was one of only two Idaho counties that lost population in the 1990s. Consequently, its rank fell from 18<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> largest county in Idaho. Shoshone County's economy has been declining for decades. Even in the 1970s, when other Panhandle communities grew rapidly, Shoshone County lost 492 residents. In the 1980s, a series of smelter and mine closures devastated the county's economy, causing it to lose 5,295 residents. Despite further job losses in the mining industry, Shoshone County lost only 160 residents in the 1990s. Factors that helped the population remain relatively stable included the growth of the tourism industry, the large number of retirees who moved to the county to enjoy its outdoor recreational opportunities, and the county's relatively inexpensive housing that turned some of its communities into bedroom communities for Coeur d'Alene.

## **AREA DEVELOPMENTS**

### **Kootenai County**

- Wal-Mart, which recently broke ground on a 184,000-square-foot supercenter in Post Falls, plans to build a 220,000-square-foot supercenter in Coeur d'Alene. Both stores will sell groceries. When the Coeur d'Alene store opens near the intersection of U.S. Highway 95 and Aqua Avenue in early 2002, it will employ about 400 people.

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